DOCTRINAL AND CONTROVERSIAL.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

The Editors reserve the right to erase all improper personalities and objectionable expressions found in any article accepted for this department; and they alone shall be the judges.

Immortality—Reply to Bro. I. Bowman.

BY J. A. RIDENOUR.

I had not intended to say anything more through the paper upon the subject of the soul's immortality, especially since I notice that some of the readers of our paper are growing tired of the subject. But your criticism of my first article upon this subject seems to demand a reply. If the readers of our paper will bear with me, and the editor will allow me space, I will endeavor to give the article in No. 32 a respectful notice, and in doing so, I will try and not do any "tinkering" or press parables, or irrelevant scripture passages into my service. I am yet so far from being converted to your views by your criticisms, that I feel that my views of this subject can be easily maintained by an honorable use of the Scriptures.

You quote almost entirely from the Old Testament scriptures. I wonder why you go to that age of ignorance, when men knew as little about the intermediate state, and the immortality of the soul, as Joshua did of astronomy when he commanded the sun to stand still until he could slay the Philistines.

Your authors, David, Solomon and Jacob—good authority upon many other subjects—are not good authority upon this. They were in darkness upon this subject, and their teachings had but slight allusions to immortality and these were but vague and erroneous notions held by the most enlightened up to our Savior's time.

You certainly remember that Paul teaches us, in his letter to Timothy, that "life and immortality" was only brought to light after Jesus Christ came, and by him "through the Gospel." This at once, suggests to us why the Old Testament is so full of darkness upon this subject, and the new so full of light. But to show you that the Jews were in darkness upon this subject, until Jesus enlightened them by his teaching, I will call your attention to some of his plainest teachings. One sect of the Jews—the Sadducees— did not believe in the resurrection, and, like you, did not believe that man had any soul or spirit that would live after the body was dead. They thought to puzzle the Savior by asking him whose wife the woman should be in the resurrection who had been wedded to seven brothers during life. Jesus replied, ye err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven. But he also took advantage of this opportunity to enlighten them upon the intermediate state. He said, "have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead but of the living. And the multitude were astonished at his doctrine." Matt. 22: 29, 33. The argument means thus: God is not the God of the dead but of the living. But he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not dead but living; Therefore, also the soul does not die with the body. Jesus explains and applies this scripture, and this one argument outweighs all I have ever heard on the other side of this question. No wonder the multitude marveled at his teaching. He was bringing life and immortality to light through his gospel teachings. It swept away all their erroneous notions about the soul sleeping, or dying. And there are men to-day who marvel at this same grand, glorious soul-cheering old gospel teaching. In view of it Paul preferred to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. Who could meet death cheerfully with no brighter hope before him than to be blotted out of conscious existence for thousands of years? I shudder at the thought.

My dear brother you ask me to just cite you to one plain passage of Scripture that teaches that the soul is immortal, and will not die. If what I have already said is not sufficient, I ask your attention to the following:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my sayings he shall never see death." John 8: 51. The Jews believed that the soul died with the body, hearing Jesus say this, said (as I hope there are none willing to say now), "Now we know that thou art a devil, Abraham is dead and the prophets are dead; and thou sayest if a man keep my sayings he should never taste of death." They needed the same lesson he had taught the Sadducees, that Abraham was not dead but still living. Jesus said to Martha, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Jno. 11: 26 Again, in Jno. 6: 50, 51, "This is the bread that cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die, but live forever."—By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, Heb. 11: 5. And was not the prophet Elijah also taken in the same way? And did not he, in company with Moses, many hundred years after Moses' body died, literally appear upon a literal mountain in Palestine, and literally converse with the Savior, in the presence of Peter, James, and John? Were they not competent witnesses? And do they not testify to this fact? And does not this prove beyond the possibility of a doubt that they were there alive and do still live?

I believe the account given of the rich man and Lazerus to be real history and no one can show it to be anything else. The Savior shows by this that both the wicked and the righteous mantiain a conscious existence after the death of the body.

Our Lord had a mortal body. It died on the cross. Yet it is said of him that he only hath immortality dwelling in light, that is underived and independent men have it as they have their being from the Creator. Though Jesus had a mortal body—"Man is mortal," the man was crucified.—Yet, his soul was immortal and was with the undying soul of the penitent thief, the same day he gave up the ghost, or expired on the cross. His ghost or spirit hovering left the body; it was as James teaches, dead. "The body without the spirit is dead." But while this mortal body of the Savior lay in the tomb, his living spirit visited the abode of the spirits in prison, and preached unto them the Gospel. See 1 Peter 3: 18, 4: 6. What, preach to dead souls! No, but to the souls of the antediluvians, who, were at that time conscious living prisoners. And Jesus as the master of the prison, having the keys of death and hell, "Opened the prison to them that were bound, and proclaimed liberty to the captives," "bringing out the prisoners from the prison house," saying to the prisoners, "go show yourselves." Isaiah 42: 6, 7, and 49: 8, 9, and 61: 1, 2. The Redeemer's soul was not left in hell. Acts 2: 25 But he led captivity captive and gave gifts (of liberty and salvation) unto men. Having now brought his other sheep which were not of this fold (of men in the flesh). His body was quickened—made alive again. All these New Testament facts and teachings, prove to a demonstration that the souls of both saints and sinners live on after the body is dead. If this will not convince, I feel that more will not.

Dear Brother if you will turn to my article from which you quote and read again you will discover you misquote my language, or rather my scripture quotation. Neither I nor the scripture I quoted from Rev 20, say any thing about souls being slain, killed, or beheaded. The Revelator says he saw the souls *of them* that were beheaded. By the prepositional phrase "of them" the relation of possession is denoted and shows that the beheaded bodies of the martyrs once possessed the souls that John saw.

Brother Isaac if I did not know you as well as I do, and feel that you offered this criticism though a mistake, from not having read my article correctly, I should surely accuse you of trifling with sacred things. But you can now see there is no danger of me beheading myself "with my own sword." I wish also to call your attention to some of your quotations. You have quoted from the Psalms, but when I turn to read I find it is not there; See your article where you quote Psalms 70, and 67: 9. These quotations may be somewhere else but they are not there. You quote Psalms 115: 17, "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." The next verse reads, "But we will bless the Lord from this time forth, and forever more praise the Lord." How do you reconcile them, It suits me as it is.

The above was written before I saw the second installment of your article. Having read EVANGELIST No. 33, in which your article is concluded, I hasten to close my reply. But in doing so will condense my remarks as much as possible. It seems you love to quote from the Emphatic Diaglott, but it is well known, that the author Mr. Wilson was a soul sleeper, and it is plainly to be seen that his sentiments had something to do with the rendering he gives to some passages of scripture. But you are certainly welcome to all the aid he can afford you. "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit: the redemption of our body." Rom. 8: 23. Paul's experience was similar to that of every other true Christian, he felt that natural depravity of his own heart, and that even after conversion human nature is unchanged, and that there was a continual warfare to keep "his body under," and in subjection to the will of Christ, and that even then "the things that he would not do he did, and the things he would do he did not." He earnestly prayed the Lord thrice that this thorn (human depravity) might be taken "out of the flesh." But the Lord said "my grace is sufficient." So he, like all other Christians, had to fight on, watch and pray, and not let "sin reign in his mortal body." Rom. 6: 12. Groan and wait until this "vile body will be changed and fashioned like unto his (Christ's) glorious body. Phil. 3: 21. Then we will be delivered from this bondage of corruption, and receive the redemption of our bodies. Rom. 8: 23. Then this mortal (body) will have put on immortality, and will be clothed with that heavenly house, which is not temporal but eternal, "whose builder and maker is God." All this will take place in the resurrection, and not before.

The soul or spirit which ever you please to call it, does not need a body. It is a pure spirit and mingles with the spirits of just men made perfect, in the paradise of God. Or if wicked, with the wicked, with the spirits of the wicked, like the antediluvians in the prison house of hell, the other paradise—the one to which the Savior and the thief went from their crosses, while their bodies were sleeping the sleep of death, and knew nothing that was going on under the sun. Yes, my brother, after the resurrection, when this mortal body shall have put on immortality then mortality will be swallowed up in life. These bodies that were dead will be quickened to die no more. They will be fashioned like unto his glorified body. We see him as he is and we like him. No wonder we groan for it.

Where is Paradise? you ask. Wherever it is and whatever it is, as the term is used in the New Testament, it is certainly not the garden of Eden. Paul was caught up into the third heaven into paradise. 2 Cor. 12: 4. The term only occurs three times in the New Testament. Twice it means the place of heavenly felicity and once it means the place of departed evil spirits. Paradise means therefore, the departed spirit land, or the abode of departed spirits. See Smith's Bible Dictionary.

(*To be continued.*)

The genuine Christian does not depend upon fair weather for pleasure. He enjoys the sunshine as well as other men do, but he is also happy in the storm.—Western Advocate.

Say everything for vice which you can say, magnify any pleasure as much as you please, but do not believe you have any secret for sending on quicker the sluggish blood, and for refreshing the faded nerve.—Sidney Smith.

A courteous disposition becomes the elect of God; for the design of the gospel is not only to soften the minds of men, but to sweeten them, and to promote friendship among men, as well as reconciliation with God.